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AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0601

July 19, 2002

Vasquez Boulevard/I-70 Comments
Ms. Bonnie Lavelle
Remedial Project Manager
EPA Region 8 (8EPR-SR)
999 18th Street, Suite 300
Denver, Colorado 80202-2466

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EPA REGION 8
SUPERFUND BRANCH

Dear Ms. Lavelle:

I am writing in regards to the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) proposed clean up plan for the Vasquez-Boulevard and Interstate 70 Superfund Site (VB I-70). I commend you and EPA Region 8 for keeping my office apprised of this important Superfund project and for undergoing a truly unique public outreach and community involvement process.

I also appreciate the special consideration the EPA has exhibited toward the VB I-70 project and EPA's willingness to think beyond the normal confines of Superfund to address the unique needs of what truly is an environmental justice community.

It is evident a tremendous amount of work and analysis went into the proposed plan and that environmental justice is a relatively new concept that the EPA is trying to incorporate into their risk analysis and clean up plans.

The impact of lead contamination on our children is a well documented public health concern. The compounded risks of elevated lead contamination in the paint and in the yards of the community's homes combined with the other multiple pollution sources constitute a cumulative risk that deserves urgent attention.

The environmental justice aspects of this clean up combined with the multiple risks to the children demand a clean up to the highest standards. Therefore, I support a lead clean up level of 400 ppm. This level also has strong support in the community. While I recognize this is a screening level for initial site investigation for EPA's Superfund sites, in light of the cumulative risks at the VB I-70 site, I believe this is a reasonable baseline cleanup level.

I understand the EPA is now considering guidance on how to address cumulative pollution impacts at Superfund sites across the nation. While we need to move quickly to select a remedy for the site, we also need to consider the broader cumulative impacts.

We cannot allow the admitted need for additional testing of children for lead and other impacts to delay the cleanup.

Because current law is unable to adequately address this cumulative and complicated risk, the EPA should move forward on what it does have authority to do, and that is to clean up as many yards as reasonably possible.

Lastly, in briefings I have received about the VB I-70 project, the EPA proposed, as part of the sites remedial action, to consider the multiple sources of contamination and to identify: "chemicals, exposure pathways, and areas of concern to assist in the efforts to address cumulative risks." We see no mention of this commitment in the preferred alternative and would like clarification on how EPA intends to implement this proposal.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the VB I-70 proposed plan. I look forward to working with the EPA on the further investigation of the multiple pollution impacts these neighborhoods face. It is vitally important that the cumulative risks suffered by these communities are defined and quickly acted upon. In this day and age, with all we know about the health impacts of air and water pollution and extended exposure of hazardous chemicals and heavy metals to our citizens, no community in our country should disproportionately suffer from environmental pollution.

Thank you for consideration of my comments.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Diana DeGette". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Diana" and last name "DeGette" clearly distinguishable.

Diana DeGette
Member of Congress

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-0601

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M.C.

